

# Heavy Is The Cost

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Summary: Grieving the recent loss of a friend and lonely, Rey writes a response to an ad in the local newspaper, against her better judgement. Reylo, 1990s NYC AU, slow burn.

## 1. Chapter 1

\_'Wanted single F, under 32. Must enjoy the sun, must enjoy the sea. Sought by single M. Mrs. Destiny. Send photo to address. Is it you and me? '\_

Rey dumped the newspaper on her desk, biting her bottom lip worryingly. She'd been rereading the stupid ad on her way home ever since it'd caught her eye amongst the pages. What kind of person puts dating ads in newspapers? They would have to be lonely. Her shoulders sagged at the thought.

After staring dumbly at the newspaper for a few minutes, Rey shook her head and took off her coat, hanging it up next to the door of her small apartment. She kicked off her shoes and padded back into the room, pointedly ignoring the paper sitting on the desk as she tried not to think about writing back. It was a horrible idea and should absolutely be ignored, there was no way of telling whether or not the guy was a nutjob or whatever else could infest the city.

She made herself spaghetti and watched classic Disney movies on her old television set for the next three hours. It was confirmed: The Fox And The Hound still made her cry like a child, even though it was animated and completely not real. She was glad Finn wasn't home yet, she didn't want him seeing her crying, although she knew he'd probably be sobbing over this movie, too. He was her best and closest friend, but often worked longer hours than she did as of late. Rey suspected he didn't like coming home to the apartment knowing Han wouldn't be there, dropping in to check on them.

Chewie still came around sometimes, but he was always somber and

quiet. Not in his character, but it was deeply understandable. He'd taken Han's death harder than she and Finn had, and they both felt affected by it still, even months later. But Chewbacca had known him for so much longer, and it was painful to think about.

There was a familiar tug of pain in her chest at the thought of the old pilot they'd befriended, rough around the edges but kind to the both of them. He never deserved what happened to him, even if his past wasn't the best. It made her feel angry, confused.

The horrible loneliness of missing him made her heart heavy, and she suddenly felt exhausted. She turned off the TV and stretched out on the couch, the room already dark, not even glancing at the newspaper where it sat, and drifted off.

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When she woke up, Finn's coat and shoes were next to hers in the hallway, and a blanket was draped over her snugly. His bedroom door was closed, and the small living room was nearly pitch black. The only sound was the distant hum of traffic outside the building, but she'd gotten used to it, over time. Rey glanced at the desk across the room to where the glowing digital clock sat. It read three AM, and she groaned slightly.

It took a great deal of willpower to force herself to get up, maneuvering around the coffee table to avoid bruising her shins on it, a grave mistake she'd made countless times before. She had work in a few hours, and needed to set the clocks alarm so she didn't end up being late, and switched on the desk lamp to grab the clock. Rey winced at the sudden brightness, and tilted the small light away from her face to the other end of the desk.

When she set the clock back down, she reached over to turn the lamp off and froze when she saw the newspaper sitting there, the ad still in plain sight. Finn hadn't moved it, or seen it, rather. Again with the horrible debate of should or should not. She thought of how lonely she was. This man must be lonely, too?

There were a lot of risks, writing to a local stranger. She'd learned the hard way several times in her life that sometimes people went out of their way to be antagonistic, but there were good people, too. Wasn't the hope of meeting somebody kind better than the risk it posed? Out of all the horrible people in her life, the few she'd met that really mattered, made it all worth it. It was decidedly a chance worth taking, there was no harm in it.

She finally pulled out the chair and sat down. She plucked a pen from the cup and pulled out a piece of paper. Everything she knew advised her against this, but it felt like the right thing to do. The right thing for her right now. Even though it probably wasn't going to work out... The idea of romantic companionship with somebody made her lips quirk into a small, secretive smile.

Rey was careful with her wording, and spent the next half hour going over exactly what she wanted to write.

\_ 'Reply to single M: \_

><em>My name is Rey. Cell phone number here, call if you have the time. 22 and bored. Grieving over loss. Sorry to be heavy, but heavy

is the cost.'

She quickly wrote down her number onto the page before sealing the letter in an envelope, leaving it next to the clock so she wouldn't forget to send it out in the morning. She exhaled and clicked off the lamp, wearily laying back down on the couch. It was an hour before she fell back asleep, all the while thinking of the possibilities.

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Her hand shook as she dropped the envelope into the mailbox on her way to work the next morning, and she felt jittery. Hopeful. This may be the start of something new, exciting, and it was an energetic feeling she hadn't had in a while, even if it might only last a little while. At least it happened at all.

## 2. Chapter 2

It only took a few days of nervous glancing at the newsstand before she found his response in the papers, and she practically skipped the way home with it. Rey hadn't been expecting a reply, considering how cryptic her answer to his ad had been. Writing at three in the morning made her a little more open than she'd like to have been, but it had been a spur of the moment type thing. And it had worked, hadn't it?

'Reply to Rey:

>Thanks so much for response. These things can be scary, not always what you want. How about a drink? I'll phone you first I guess, I hope I see you soon.'

She sat hunched over the desk, pouring over the message over and over, as if there were something in it to be deciphered. He seemed a little less like a potential creep, a little kind, actually. It was still hard to tell, but something in what he said was a little comforting, as if he knew how nervous she was. But somebody couldn't possibly gather that from what she said, so Rey brushed that theory off fast enough.

Not always what you want. She wondered if that meant anything, it felt like sort of an odd thing to write.

Single M. He said he'd call her first, but hadn't left any details on when. She'd picked it up on the way home from work, so it was just after five thirty. What kind of job did he have? Would he be getting home around now? Did he even have a job? Rey shook her head of the snowballing thoughts, he must definitely have some sort of income to be able to pay to reply to her back and forth. And he apparently had a phone, so.

Rey rolled the desk chair back across the room to where the phone sat in its cradle attached to the wall and stared at it, as if that would make Single M call faster. Trying not to fantasize too much about what he might sound like so as not to give herself high hopes for nothing, she rolled back over to the coffee table and grabbed the TV remote.

She turned on the faithful old television set without getting up from

the slightly dented wheeled desk chair. She and Finn were adamant on specifically getting a desk chair with wheels when they first got it, even if it wasn't truly a necessary thing to have.

There were a lot of good memories associated with this chair, and she smiled and patted it, remembering the evening when they'd spent an hour rolling each other down the quieter sidewalks in it like children. They may or may not have flipped it a few times, and may or may not have been bruised up little, but it had still been fun regardless.

The theme of the new show, The X-Files, on the TV hummed softly in the background as the memory brought up another question. Should she tell Finn? He was like a brother to her, they sort of told each other everything. He was a little overprotective at times, and would probably think her silly to even bother writing back some stranger in the newspaper.

As happy as she was about Single M's response to her, Rey sort of wanted to know at least his name before she crowed victory to anybody else. Still, though, she didn't really like keeping secrets much anymore. It wasn't a part of who she was, who she planned to become.

She drummed her fingers against the arm of the chair, deciding to wait until Finn came home to make any sort of food this time, and to wait impatiently until the guy from the newspaper phoned her.

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Kylo Ren stepped silently off the elevator as it reached his floor, glad to be off it as usual. Elevators always seemed too small for his frame, and gave people too much time to stare at him. It made him scowl, but luckily it was too late in the night for anybody to see it. He prowled down the hallway to his door, jamming his key into the door and forcing it open.

He locked the door behind him as soon as he stepped inside, immediately beginning to work at his scarf, tugging it off with a little more force than necessary. Kylo dumped his gloves on the table next to the door. His long, black coat and jacket underneath came next, which he hung up in the closet. The apartment was dark, only dimly illuminated by the window, but he didn't move to turn on any lights.

With a deep sigh he eased onto his couch in the dark, tilting his head back and closing his eyes for a long moment. Fatigue made his shoulders ache, overused and strained from a particularly difficult day. He hated it, and didn't know how long he just sat there as if waiting for death. But he himself was death, in his own right.

After a couple more lengthy moments he tilted his face towards the coffee table, staring at the compact leather notebook he'd written the young lady's phone number in. Rey. Her name was Rey.

Why she'd responded to his laughable ad, or why he'd put the damn thing in the papers anyways was an enigma. Just another question he didn't know the answer to, another thing he probably needed therapy for.

She was twenty two, a good ten years younger than him. Good lord. Was he doing this? He'd written that he'd call her. Kylo glanced at his watch, it was two in the morning.

Without another thought he rose from the couch and picked up the notebook from the low table.

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Single M ended up not calling her until she was very much asleep, leaving a short message on the answering machine. When Rey found it in the morning, she was kind of annoyed, waiting until Finn left and she'd had coffee before listening to it.

"Hello," a deep, soft voice rang out from the speaker, much to her surprise, "God, sorry about the hour. Work schedules for me are not- They're kind of shitty. Sorry. Thank you, Rey, for responding. I have a busy schedule, but I think we could meet this Sunday? St. Jude's club at noon? I have to go now, though. I really look forward to meeting you, Rey."

Hearing this deep-voiced stranger use her name on her answering machine was a lot more stimulating than it should have been, but she still felt giddy. His tone was hushed and low, almost shy. Rey wasn't mad anymore for the time of day he'd called her at, although he still hadn't mentioned his name.

It was a little off-putting, but she guessed he could have forgotten. He had said that he was busy, and she was able to put at least one of her worries at rest, he wasn't a jobless weirdo. Although, picturing what sort of job would cause him to call her at 2:37 AM on a Tuesday was disorienting.

She listened to the message a few more times, simply fascinated by the way his voice sounded. It's impossible to tell what a person looked like by their voice, but Rey imagined someone tall and mature, hiding a small smile behind her coffee cup.

If they were going to meet, though, they'd have to know what one or the other looked like. It'd be a little silly to try and identify him by his voice. She got up and went back over to the desk, plucking one of the nicer photographs of herself out of its frame from where it sat. The one where she was actually wearing her hair down. Giddily, she sat down and tapped the pen on the desk for a good couple of minutes, thinking, before writing her next response.

'Reply to Single M:

>I never got your name. I assume you're 32? Your voice, it sounded kind, and I hope that you like me. I'm not a film star beauty, but I'll send a photograph.'

Rey sealed both envelopes carefully and tucked them into her coat pocket on her way out of the apartment, feeling significantly less nervous this time around than when she'd first replied to him.

End  
file.